

"English Reader" itself were made up of the choicest selections from the English classics of the eighteenth century. There was a time in which the English Reader occupied a place in our literature only second to the Bible. The multiplication of books and newspapers in later generations relegates all school books to a lower place in the sphere of literary influence. It is to be feared, however; that few, if any of our modern school readers are as well fitted to assert a position for themselves as the "English Reader."

I cling to the belief that in some of the best of the old schools the elementary branches of education were taught with greater efficiency than in our better equipped schools of the present day. While the dire necessity of the situation often placed the most impudent pretenders in the seat of learning, and not infrequently the only men available as teachers were moral wrecks, yet among the old schoolmasters not a few were men of good attainments and excellent character, who were content to do "good by stealth and blush to find it fame."

The schoolmaster of the old days, if he respected himself, stood higher with pupils and parents than the teacher of to-day. The great ordeal of passing the Board, successfully, gave the district schoolmaster much importance. When he went to Charlottetown he rubbed shoulders with Cundall, Kenny, and Arbuckle, the masters of the Central Academy. He could write a will, draft a petition to the House of Assembly, or hold up his end in argument with the minister on the doctrine of predestination. But it was only when he sent home word with the children to their parents requiring them to procure Lennie's Grammar, and Chalmer's Geography, and actually undertook to teach these new-fangled, and abstruse branches of education that the extent of his erudition began to dawn on the minds of the people of the district.

"And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
How one small head could carry all he knew."

D. FERGUSON.